



OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

DECEMBER 2014



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Commission



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Dog Park
Opens



WATERSHEDS BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF
WATERSHEDS IN
LOS ALTOS HILLS

4

NUMBER OF
NAMED CREEKS

12

NUMBER OF
REGULATORY
AGENCIES THAT
PROTECT CREEKS

6

MILES OF CREEKS

17

MINIMUM SETBACK
(IN FEET) FROM
CREEKS IN TOWN

25



Vital Watersheds

Wherever we travel on the landscape, we are in a watershed and whatever we do affects a watershed. See if you can identify which of the four watersheds in Los Altos Hills you spend time in. Here is a hint: the watersheds are named for the primary creek stem that carries water to the bay: Permanente, Adobe, Barron, and Matadero. Our watersheds include stream types ranging from a paved channel to a mature riparian woodland, and land that supports large areas of natural vegetation as well as urban development.

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***The better people treat the land within the watershed,
the less chance there will be fiscal and social costs associated with
pollution and reduced water flows downstream.***

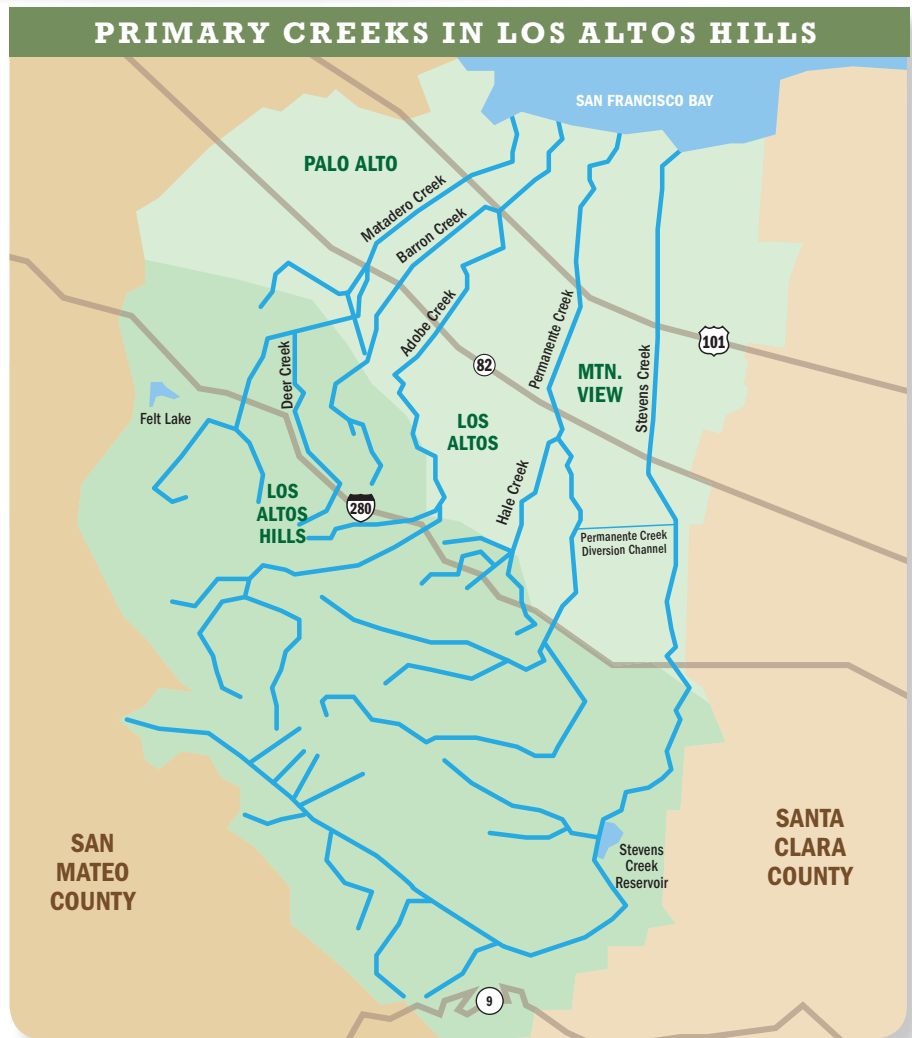
What is a Watershed?

A watershed is a geographic area usually demarcated by mountains. Water flows downhill, gradually collecting into tributaries that contribute to the main creek stem. The watershed may extend from mountaintops to the mouth of a river; it may also contain sub-watersheds for each tributary. It is important to think about creeks in terms of their watershed because everything that happens within the watershed, regardless of location, can impact the creek. A holistic, "watershed," approach to creeks provides the best protection for water quality, vegetation, wildlife, and the human environment.

Why Care About a Watershed?

The shortest answer is that everything accumulates downstream. Although in the broadest sense we are in the watershed of San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, it is important to follow what is happening upstream. The better people treat the land within the watershed, the less chance there will be fiscal and social costs associated with pollution and reduced water flows downstream. Watersheds also provide habitat that benefits both wildlife and humans. That is why there are several state and federal agencies that monitor direct impacts to creeks, aside from local governance: the California Regional Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any project that directly affects a waterway or the vegetation immediately adjacent to it could be subject to permits or other authorizations governed by these agencies, and stiff fines can be levied for non-compliance.

Watersheds have also directly influenced local history. Adobe Creek, for example, once provided an abundance of wildlife and plants for the Ohlone Native American tribe, and as a result there are prehistoric artifacts in that watershed that we are now required to care for. In the past, the water that flowed in narrow creeks in our hills spread out in the flatter areas and changed course annually, so that flooding was unpredictable. Within the last 75 years most of the creeks were channelized downstream in order to



control flooding impacts and allow the growth of neighborhoods in Mountain View and Palo Alto. That dramatically changed the dynamics of the watersheds, affected the ability of wildlife to connect to the bay, and reduced the wildlife diversity in Los Altos Hills.

Local Watersheds and Creeks

Permanent Creek originates in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Black Mountain and Montebello Ridge. It flows through unincorporated Santa Clara County lands for about five miles, then flows through Los Altos and Mountain View to reach the San Francisco Bay. One of its main tributaries is Hale Creek, which is located south of Foothill College by the Neary Quarry and flows to Magdalena Avenue and across Foothill Expressway into Los Altos. The Permanent Creek watershed covers 17.3 square miles,

has seven tributary creeks, and is a natural channel until near El Camino Hospital. Downstream to the bay it mostly flows through a paved channel. In the upper watershed, it provides cold freshwater habitat for fish and amphibians; fish spawning habitat; and supports the California red-legged frog,

Permanent Creek

a federally-listed threatened species, in the upper watershed. It is also defined by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as impaired by urban pesticides (Diazinon, an organophosphate banned from residential use in 2004), selenium, and trash.

Adobe Creek has a rich cultural history, and several shell mounds and burial grounds of the Ohlone people have been found along its banks near Moody Road and O'Keefe Lane (see the Wikipedia report on Adobe Creek for more historical information). It starts near Black Mountain and drains about 11 square miles, flowing as a natural creek through the Hidden Villa Ranch, Foothill College, Redwood Grove and Shoup Park, under Edith Avenue, under Foothill Expressway, and past the Alta Mesa Cemetery toward El Camino Real. It is controlled in a concrete-lined channel from El Camino to the Palo Alto Flood Basin. It was historically a perennial creek (it flowed year-round), and was fished



Adobe Creek

for steelhead as recently as the 1970s. Steelhead is now a federally-listed threatened species in the San Francisco Bay and on the San Mateo coast, and although a run could potentially be restored with a lot of work, Adobe Creek does not currently support steelhead.

Barron Creek originates from the hills around La Paloma Road in Los Altos Hills and flows along La Paloma, under residential development along Fremont Road to St. Francis Drive, where it daylights and flows again as a natural stream to Arastradero Road, under Foothill Expressway to the flood control basin at Gunn High School, and into Bol Park in the Barron Park neighborhood. After that the creek is controlled through culverts and paved



Barron Creek

drainage channels and directed to enter Adobe Creek near the Palo Alto Flood Basin. It drains three square miles of the hills around Town Hall and is the most modified creek in our area; more than 60 percent of the creek channel is paved. When there are heavy storms, the flood control basin at Gunn High School is used to divert Barron Creek flows into Matadero Creek through a bypass channel. Barron Creek has supported chorus frogs in the past, but when the creek flows only with irrigation runoff the water contains chloramines, which frogs cannot tolerate. That effect is diluted with storm water flows.

The Matadero Creek watershed includes land in both Los Altos Hills and Palo Alto. Matadero Creek originates near Altamont Road, and flows along Page Mill Road, across Stanford lands to El Camino Real. From there it is channelized and its flow is controlled through Palo Alto to the Palo Alto Flood Basin. It is eight miles long and drains 14 square miles of land. Deer Creek in Los Altos Hills is a major tributary that starts along Purissima Road near the Little League fields and captures water from portions of Purissima Road and Elena Road. Deer Creek flows into Matadero Creek at Deer Creek Road on Stanford lands. This watershed provides habitat for the California red-legged frog, a federally-listed threatened species.

Caring for Watersheds

If residents think about what the rain or irrigation can carry away from their

property, they are on track for caring for the watershed. The water quality in most of the creeks in the Bay Area are compromised by pesticides and trash, and creeks can also be adversely affected when water carries more soil than usual downstream because vegetation has been removed (erosion). One property's effects are small, but the cumulative effect with other properties is large. The best way to protect everything downstream is to minimize pesticide use, take care of trash or any loose object in one's yard that could be carried away by water, and be mindful of vegetation removal and the need for erosion control during construction projects.



Matadero Creek

Enjoying Watersheds

Several of the creeks in town can be enjoyed recreationally. Most of them are bordered by pathways along some portion of their reach. Many can be accessed directly for a "creek walk" in the channel to experience that habitat. Refer to the map on the previous page to identify which creek is in your neighborhood so that you can be aware of your connection to the watershed, which may also represent a connection to neighboring communities and the south bay as a whole.

Taylor Vanderlip is an environmental consultant specializing in biological issues.

FUN FACTS

- It was possible to fly fish Adobe Creek for steelhead into the 1970s.
- Different names for streams are used across America. Examples are kill, run, crick, creek, arroyo, wash.
- Even when a creek bed is dry, it is possible that the creek is flowing underground. It all depends on the level of water in the underground aquifer. That is why some dry creek beds still support trees that are not drought-tolerant.



TO LEARN MORE:

Visit the following websites to learn more about local watersheds: www.valleywater.org/Services/WatershedInformation.aspx, www.museumca.org/creeks/MapPA.html. A brochure titled "Creeks and Riparian Areas" can be found on the town's website.

FROM THE CITY MANAGER

On September 16, 2014, California joined more than 20 other states that have taken steps to improve traffic safety and reduce vehicle-related injuries by requiring drivers to give bicyclists a three-foot buffer zone when passing.

The Three Feet for Safety Act requires a driver who passes a cyclist traveling in the same direction to keep the vehicle at least three feet away from the cyclist. As is often the case in town with our narrow winding streets, if traffic or roadway conditions prevent a motorist from giving three feet of clearance, the driver must "slow to a speed that is reasonable and prudent" and only pass when the cyclist will not be in danger. Drivers violating the law will receive a ticket of at least \$238. If a bicyclist is injured, the citation can total \$982.

Traffic safety is a shared responsibility. A common complaint heard from residents is that some bicyclists will ride in three or four abreast blocking the full travel lane and refuse to move over. Cyclists can do their part by remembering to obey the rules of the road and stop or move over when it is safe to do so if there are five or more cars behind them. For more information about the Three Feet for Safety Act, visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles website at: www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d11/vc21760.htm

Coyotes in Byrne Preserve

This past summer the town temporarily closed a trail in Byrne Preserve to dogs. The reason for this temporary prohibition was to protect Byrne Preserve trail users after the town received reports of one or more coyotes behaving aggressively toward dogs. This behavior was precipitated by repeated instances of dog owners allowing their dogs to roam the Preserve off leash in violation of the town's leash law. Coyotes

establish territories like other predators. The presence of free-roaming dogs in the Preserve during the time of the year when coyotes are likely to be raising their young put the coyotes on high alert and provoke their warning behavior. The City of Palo Alto also restricts dogs on certain trails in the Arastradero Preserve



when there is a chance of conflict. These closures are temporary measures meant to protect people and their dogs as well as the coyotes. Similar to Palo Alto, the restricted area for dog walking was just one portion of Byrne Preserve. It was not a ban on the entire Preserve.

At this time, the temporary closure signs have been removed and no coyote/dog conflicts have been reported in at least 30 days. The town hosted a public education forum on coyotes and a video of the forum: <http://vimeo.com/86606163>. The town will continue to enforce its leash law and violators will be cited. However, to mitigate the problem in a positive way, the City Council has authorized the construction of a basic dog park on public property located at the corner of Elena and Purissima Roads. Residents now have a place to let their dogs play and roam off-leash with other dogs (see page 11).



2015-23 Housing Element Update

Every eight years, state law requires that the Housing Element be updated. The Housing Element is a required section of the Town's General Plan that deals with the planning and development of housing in Los Altos Hills. The current update of the Housing Element is for the 2015-23 planning period. Town staff is currently in the process of updating statistical data, policies, and programs to meet new state guidelines. Therefore, the Planning Department is interested in residents' opinions and comments regarding potential new policies to address the town's "fair share" of regional housing needs, as well as the future needs of residents. In order to obtain feedback, a questionnaire was mailed out to residents and an initial community meeting was held on November 20. Thank you to all residents who attended the meeting and provided comments. Based on comments received from the public, staff will propose modifications to the document and present the changes at future community meetings. Notices for those meetings will be printed in the *Los Altos Town Crier* and posted on the town's website. If you have any questions on the Housing Element update or want to be included on a notification list, please contact the Planning Department at 941-7222, or e-mail Steve Padovan at spadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov.



Youth Commission

The Los Altos Hills Youth Commission (LAHYC), established in 2013, is comprised of 18 to 20 Los Altos Hills teens who enjoy working together to make Los Altos Hills a youth-friendly environment. Vice-chair A.J. Uppal, a member since 6th grade, explains, “The Youth Commission’s purpose is to represent Los Altos Hills teens in local government and to engage the youth of Los Altos Hills through activities and volunteer events.” To join the organization teens must be residents of Los Altos Hills, must be in grade level 6 to 12, have attended one meeting, and volunteered at one event prior to submitting their application. The applicant is interviewed by members of the Youth Commission and, if there is space, members vote for the applicant to be appointed by the City Council.

The LAHYC holds its election each year in August. The current LAHYC leadership consists of co-chairs Vamsi Gadiraju (a senior at The Harker School) and Sonia Uppal (a junior at Los Altos High School); vice-chair A.J. Uppal (a freshman at Los Altos High School), and treasurer Caroline Steffens (a junior at Los Altos High School), along with staff liaison Sarah Gualtieri, Community Services Supervisor.

Members of the LAHYC volunteer for many of the town-hosted events, like the Easter Egg Hunt, Town Picnic, Hoedown, and the Barn Lighting. However, the organization is best known for its three signature annual events: Movie Night, the Halloween Monster Bash, and the Leadership Conference. LAHYC member Caroline Steffens talks about the benefits of attending these events, “What I love about these events is that it gives teens a chance to meet one another — something that is a bit of a challenge living in a rural town with no real gathering spots. Facebook is great for connecting virtually, but these events bring teens face to face, allowing us to work together and discover our common interests.”

Guest speaker San Jose City Councilmember Ash Kalra discusses the importance of entrepreneurship and leadership in local government at the Leadership Conference held earlier this year at the Dana Center at Hidden Villa.

One of the Youth Commission’s most popular events is the annual Leadership Conference that is held in the Spring. The conference is aimed at teens who want to make the world a better place. The LAHYC leaders choose a main topic for the Leadership Conference, then turn to the members to solicit ideas for speakers. Each member submits two to three potential speakers along with their contact information. The group then votes to arrive at two to four discussion speakers and a keynote speaker. Last year, the topic was entrepreneurship, and the subtopics were environmental entrepreneurship, leadership and entrepreneurship in local government, and technical entrepreneurship. The keynote speaker was Former California State Senator Joe Simitian. The discussion speakers included Raju Indukuri, CEO of Mtuity, and Ash Kalra, San Jose City Councilmember. The Leadership Conference is broken up into five sessions: speaker presentations, Q&A, small discussion groups, and an ice-breaker exercise, followed by the keynote speaker’s presentation. To keep the Leadership Conference intimate, attendance is limited to 30 participants who register for the event on a first-come basis.

The next event hosted by the organization will be Movie Night on Friday, February 6, 2015, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at Town Hall. Members of the LAHYC will decorate the Council Chambers based on the theme of the movie and provide snacks and beverages during the movie. The event is open to all Los Altos Hills teens and their friends, even if they do not live in town. This event is also perfect for teens who have recently moved into town and want to meet their peers. For more information, email sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov.

EXPLORING



THE

RED

PLANET

MARS

OUR NEIGHBOR MARS is the planet that has intrigued humanity the most. It was named after the Roman god of war because its reddish soil gives the planet a bloody hue in the night sky. It's the planet we have explored most closely, both from space and from the ground. Today, there are two rovers on the martian surface and a flotilla of spacecraft from different countries in orbit around it.

Mars is only half the size of Earth, and contains just a little over 10% of our planet's mass. These differences combine to give Mars only 38% of Earth's gravity. In other words, if you weighed 100 pounds on Earth, you would weigh only 38 pounds on Mars. Early telescopes showed Mars had an atmosphere, frozen ice at both its poles, and a 24-hour day, which led some to leap to the conclusion that it was similar to the Earth.

But today we know a lot more about our neighbor than those early observers. Here's

But when we see Mars today, it is as dry as dust. All the old riverbeds are empty, sand has filled in many lakebeds, and the temperatures are much colder. What has made such a dramatic change?

The answer is gravity. Little Mars could not hold on to its thicker atmosphere. The air slowly escaped into space, and reduced the pressure over billions of years — until water could no longer be a liquid. With less air pushing down, there is less reason for a liquid to stick together



first deep breath would also be your last, since the thin air is made mostly of carbon dioxide. The absence of an ozone layer would mean that nothing was filtering out the Sun's ultraviolet rays. Overall, it's not a place where humans could survive even briefly without significant protection.

Still, scientists can imagine domed cities where visitors from Earth might live comfortably in the future, particularly in the warmer equatorial regions. Mars has great tourist attractions, including the largest volcano in the solar system. And the possibility exists that fossils of early Mars life may yet survive deep in the soil, where future missions may discover them. It's no surprise then that the little red point of light in the sky still intrigues dreamers and scientists, as it did thousands of years ago.



Left: Mars as seen from the Indian Mars Orbiter Mission, Sept. 28, 2014. Above: An artist's conception of the Mars Curiosity Rover on the planet, with realistic views of the martian surface. Top right: A selfie of the Mars Curiosity Rover (image is a composite of several photos).

the story that our exploration has uncovered about the history of Mars. There is ample evidence in Martian rocks and minerals that billions of years ago, Mars had a thick atmosphere. With significant air pressure (and heat from the Sun), water on Mars was a liquid and could make rivers and lakes. Planetary scientists now believe Mars could even have experienced the first stirrings of life.

and it becomes easier to turn it into gas. This is just what happened on Mars. With the falling air pressure, more and more water became vapor.

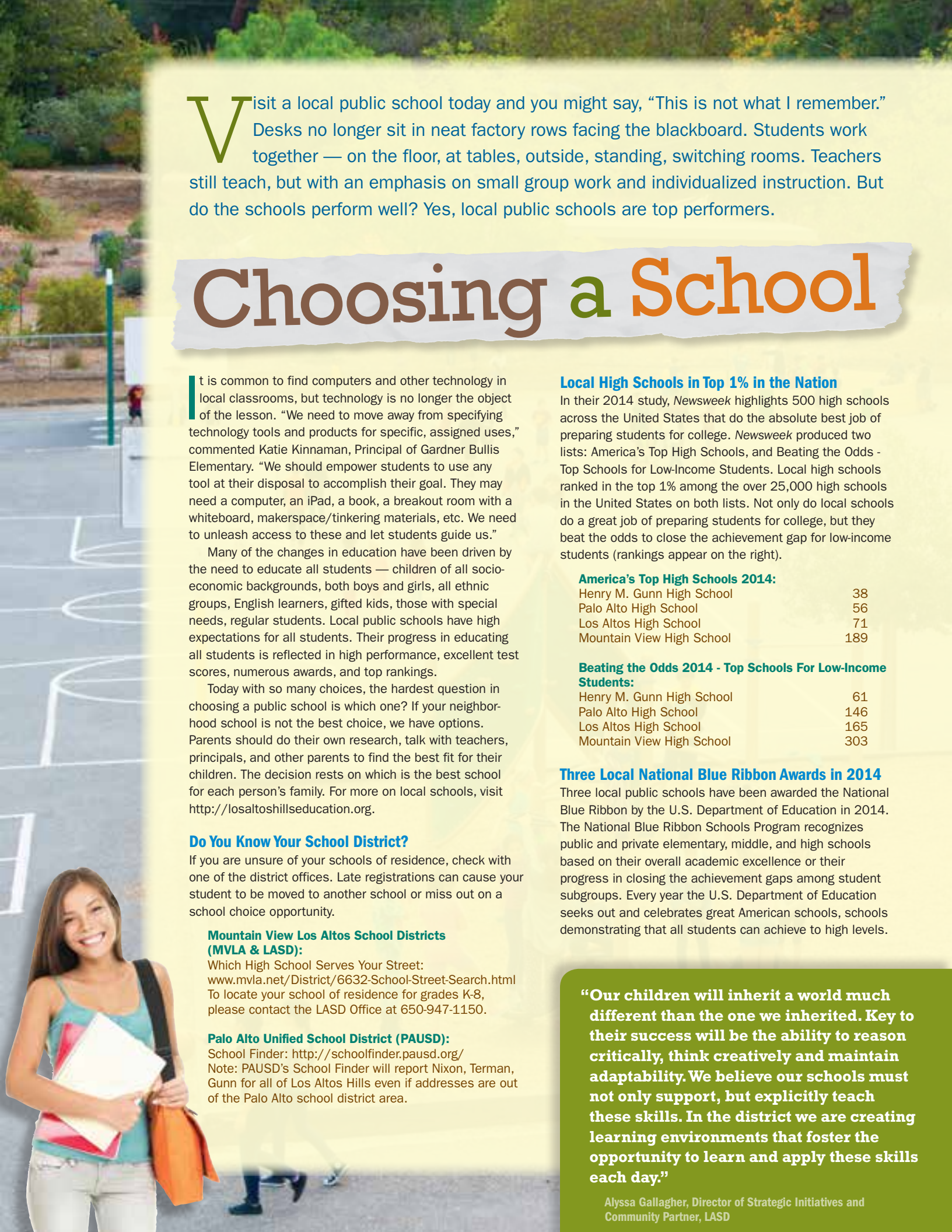
The absence of air also cooled Mars, because a blanket of air allows a planet to store up the heat of the Sun. As Mars cooled, water also froze into the soil and the ice caps, leaving the Martian surface (and any possible life forms) high and dry.

Today, the air pressure on Mars is less than one percent of Earth's pressure, and the average temperature is in the minus-60-degrees-Fahrenheit range. On the surface, your



Andrew Fraknoi is Professor of Astronomy at Foothill College. Starting

in January he will teach Astronomy 10A, an evening class on "Planets for Poets" — introducing the solar system in everyday language. Community members are welcome.



Visit a local public school today and you might say, “This is not what I remember.” Desks no longer sit in neat factory rows facing the blackboard. Students work together — on the floor, at tables, outside, standing, switching rooms. Teachers still teach, but with an emphasis on small group work and individualized instruction. But do the schools perform well? Yes, local public schools are top performers.

Choosing a School

It is common to find computers and other technology in local classrooms, but technology is no longer the object of the lesson. “We need to move away from specifying technology tools and products for specific, assigned uses,” commented Katie Kinnaman, Principal of Gardner Bullis Elementary. “We should empower students to use any tool at their disposal to accomplish their goal. They may need a computer, an iPad, a book, a breakout room with a whiteboard, makerspace/tinkering materials, etc. We need to unleash access to these and let students guide us.”

Many of the changes in education have been driven by the need to educate all students — children of all socio-economic backgrounds, both boys and girls, all ethnic groups, English learners, gifted kids, those with special needs, regular students. Local public schools have high expectations for all students. Their progress in educating all students is reflected in high performance, excellent test scores, numerous awards, and top rankings.

Today with so many choices, the hardest question in choosing a public school is which one? If your neighborhood school is not the best choice, we have options. Parents should do their own research, talk with teachers, principals, and other parents to find the best fit for their children. The decision rests on which is the best school for each person’s family. For more on local schools, visit <http://losaltoshillseducation.org>.

Do You Know Your School District?

If you are unsure of your schools of residence, check with one of the district offices. Late registrations can cause your student to be moved to another school or miss out on a school choice opportunity.

Mountain View Los Altos School Districts (MVLA & LASD):

Which High School Serves Your Street:
www.mvla.net/District/6632-School-Street-Search.html
To locate your school of residence for grades K-8, please contact the LASD Office at 650-947-1150.

Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD):

School Finder: <http://schoolfinder.pausd.org/>
Note: PAUSD’s School Finder will report Nixon, Terman, Gunn for all of Los Altos Hills even if addresses are out of the Palo Alto school district area.

Local High Schools in Top 1% in the Nation

In their 2014 study, *Newsweek* highlights 500 high schools across the United States that do the absolute best job of preparing students for college. *Newsweek* produced two lists: America’s Top High Schools, and Beating the Odds - Top Schools for Low-Income Students. Local high schools ranked in the top 1% among the over 25,000 high schools in the United States on both lists. Not only do local schools do a great job of preparing students for college, but they beat the odds to close the achievement gap for low-income students (rankings appear on the right).

America’s Top High Schools 2014:

Henry M. Gunn High School	38
Palo Alto High School	56
Los Altos High School	71
Mountain View High School	189

Beating the Odds 2014 - Top Schools For Low-Income Students:

Henry M. Gunn High School	61
Palo Alto High School	146
Los Altos High School	165
Mountain View High School	303

Three Local National Blue Ribbon Awards in 2014

Three local public schools have been awarded the National Blue Ribbon by the U.S. Department of Education in 2014. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing the achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools, schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels.

“Our children will inherit a world much different than the one we inherited. Key to their success will be the ability to reason critically, think creatively and maintain adaptability. We believe our schools must not only support, but explicitly teach these skills. In the district we are creating learning environments that foster the opportunity to learn and apply these skills each day.”

Alyssa Gallagher, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partner, LASD

“One of the core tenets of our program is teaching students about the interconnectedness of the world around them, and we fundamentally believe that starts with integrating curriculum across different subject areas beginning in kindergarten.”

Wanny Hersey, Superintendent/Principal, BCS

2014 National Blue Ribbon Awards:

Blach Junior High School, LASD

Bullis Charter School, SCCOE

Egan Junior High School, LASD

Past National Blue Ribbon Awards:

Bullis Purissima Elementary School, LASD (1992)

Mountain View High School, MVLA (1989)

Oak Avenue Elementary School, LASD (2012)

Palo Alto High School, PAUSD (1987)

Santa Rita Elementary School, LASD (1992)

Alyssa Gallagher, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships for Los Altos School District (LASD) explains, “Our children will inherit a world much different than the one we inherited. Key to their success will be the ability to reason critically, think creatively, and maintain adaptability. We believe our schools must not only support, but also explicitly teach these skills. In the district, we are creating learning environments that foster the opportunity to learn and apply these skills each day.”

Four Named Distinguished Schools in 2013-14

The California State Board of Education gives the California Distinguished School award to public schools within the state that best represent exemplary and quality educational programs. Following a selection process, approximately five percent of California schools are awarded this honor each year. Elementary schools are in even years and middle and high schools in odd years.

2014 Elementary Distinguished Schools:

Bullis Charter, Santa Clara County Office of Education

- Additional award for Exemplary Arts Education Program
Covington Elementary, LASD

2013 Middle and High School Distinguished Schools:

Blach Junior High, LASD

Los Altos High, MVLA

“One of the core tenets of our program is teaching students about the interconnectedness of the world around them, and we fundamentally believe that starts with integrating curriculum across different subject areas beginning in kindergarten,” said Wanny Hersey, Superintendent/Principal at Bullis Charter School (BCS). “We are proud to have such a comprehensive visual and performing arts program that is fully integrated with our science and engineering curriculum, led by master teachers who can deftly adapt the content to meet the needs of every student.”

Palo Alto Unified Top Performer for English Learners

Palo Alto Unified was one of the top-four performers in the state for English learners of diverse languages by Education Trust-West. An English learner is a student who speaks a primary language other than English and who lacks certain English-language skills. PAUSD’s category is defined as

more than 50% of English learners speak languages other than Spanish and/or at least three languages are spoken by 10% of English learners.

“The international diversity of our student population is a daily reminder of how important it is for our students to be prepared to participate in a global economy,” said Mary Pat O’Connell, Principal at Lucille Nixon School. “We are excited and challenged by the work underway to deepen students’ understanding and application of their knowledge in all content areas. We hold these expectations for all of our students whatever their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or first language. As always, we will be most successful when we partner effectively with our community.”

Public School Options

The local neighborhood schools are all top-ranked schools. However, you may want to choose something different.

Transfers Among Neighborhood Schools:

School districts allow students to transfer to other neighborhood schools within their districts, if space is available. This is called an “intra-district transfer.” The high schools are very full, so these transfers require special circumstances.

Bullis Charter School:

As a public charter school with grades K-8 serving Santa Clara County, all residents of Los Altos Hills can apply to this school. Entrance is determined by lottery. Priority is given to siblings and residents living in the LASD area. To learn more, visit www.bullischarterschool.com.

Palo Alto Choice Schools:

The Choice programs are Spanish Immersion (SI), Mandarin Immersion (MI), Structured Instruction (Hoover), School Farm with project-based learning (Ohlone), and Young Fives. Entrance to the Hoover, Ohlone, MI, and SI programs is based upon lottery, which is held in March. If there is a concurrent sibling that will be attending the program at the same time, the kindergarten student is placed in the program and is not included in the lottery. All students who submit applications for the Young 5s program are assessed by staff. Admission is not based upon lottery. The district does not guarantee placement in the neighborhood schools due to continued high enrollment. For details, visit: pausd.org/parents/programs/choice_schools.shtml.

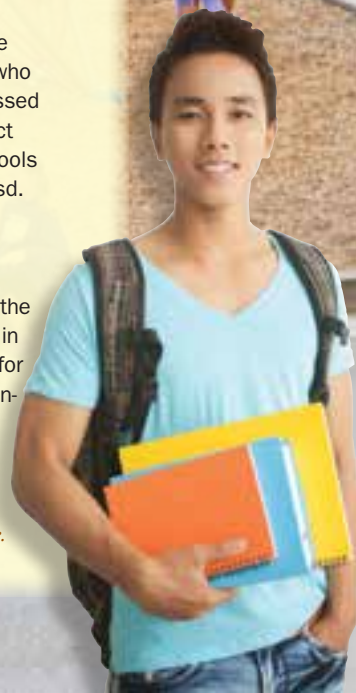
Gardner Bullis Inter-District Transfer (IDT):

Los Altos Hills students in Palo Alto Unified may attend the only public school in town. These IDT’s are considered “in district” students by LASD. This is a reversible transfer for up to seven years. Students choosing the IDT for elementary school continue to Terman and Gunn for middle school and high school. To find out how, visit: pausd.org/parents/registration/Transfers.shtml.

Heather Rose is chair of the Los Altos Hills Education Committee.

“The international diversity of our student population is a daily reminder of how important it is for our students to be prepared to participate in a global economy.”

Pat O’Connell, Principal, Lucile Nixon School



Henry Nesmith

When residents need to repair something in their home, they often head over to the True Value Hardware store in downtown Los Altos. There they will find the affable and helpful proprietor Henry Nesmith ready to talk them through the steps and find the hardware and tools they need to complete just about any do-it-yourself project.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in Kansas City with my parents and older sister. My father was in the House of Representatives and was also a real estate broker in Kansas and Missouri. My mom was originally from New York City and took care of my sister and me. I followed my older sister to Southern California for college and ended up getting a BA in Business Administration at Menlo College where I met my wife, Susan. First we lived in Menlo Park, then Los Altos, before finally moving to Los Altos Hills in 1991. We have two daughters, Nina, a real estate agent at Sereno Group and Ali, a senior at University of Colorado, Boulder.

What attracted you to live in Los Altos Hills?

We were attracted to Los Altos Hills because my in-laws lived there, we could purchase a larger property, and we enjoyed the town's quiet ambiance.

Tell us about your career path.

I started working in Kansas when I was 16. One of my first jobs was retail, selling clothing, where I learned a lot about people and customer service. During my college years, my wife and I started to flip houses so from that I gained a lot of knowledge about the housing industry and common fix-up and maintenance issues.

Who was the most influential person in your career?

My father-in-law. Because of his background in business, he was able to pass along a lot of advice and support.

What was the inspiration to open a hardware store?

Back in 1982, downtown Los Altos didn't have a hardware



store so my father-in-law suggested opening one. How hard could it be? We selected the True Value franchise since the Ace Hardware franchise at Rancho Shopping Center was already taken.

The building that houses your hardware store has a unique look and history. Can you tell us about that?

The building I'm in is actually three buildings joined together. The corner with the ice cream cone shape on the roof is the old Clint's Ice Cream Store. After it closed it was converted into Le Midi, a popular French Restaurant. When the owner retired, I purchased that building. The second building was a tack store; and the third building housed an antique shop, an empty office, and warehouse space for a local stationery store.

You recently celebrated 30 years of business. To what do you attribute your success?

I offer high-quality customer service and excellent products for my customers. We assemble just about everything we sell. For example, if you buy a BBQ from us, we put it together and will deliver it with a full tank of propane. I have a superior staff that is extremely helpful to people and will take time with each and every customer to make sure they leave happy. And if something doesn't work like it should, you can bring it back. I've learned that excellent customer service comes from wanting to have a closer commitment to your customers — and if you don't, you're out of business.

What do you enjoy the most about owning a hardware store?

It's mine, and I can buy just about anything I want. I have also enjoyed

having my daughters work with me. As a parent, having your children work side by side with you is a joy. They always have new and interesting ideas, but most of all they learn a lot about people.

What is the toughest thing about owning and managing your own store?

The sacrifices made to your time relative to your time with your family.

Around 2007 you reorganized the store.

A little over three years ago we closed down our decorative plumbing showroom in order to make more room for hardware and items that people needed more.

You always are introducing new products and new tools in your store. How do you select what to carry?

I read a lot about new items and we listen to our customers needs and that's how we add products. Twice a year we attend the True Value Hardware Convention where they showcase new products. I also have a couple of employees that are always looking for new items to carry in the store.

What are the 10 tools that every homeowner should own?

An emergency shut-off wrench to turn off gas and water; a 15-in-1 screwdriver; a hammer; duct tape; cutters/scissors; channel lock pliers; a set of allen wrenches; a measuring tape; a pipe wrench; and a utility knife.

What is the most common repair that sends people into your store?

Water issues, whether it's a toilet or plumbing issue or irrigation.

When you are not managing your store, what do you enjoy doing?

I like to lead a healthy and active lifestyle by biking and working outdoors.

Any advice for young people who are exploring career options?

Get any job you can, it won't be your last. It's easier to get a job if you have a job.

As you reflect on your 30 years in business, what makes you the most proud?

That I've been able to survive 30 years in retail with the help of my family and loyal customers.

Over the years, the Parks and Recreation Committee (PRC) has received many requests from residents to create a dog park within town borders. Thanks to the collaborative



efforts of the City Council, Parks and Recreation Committee, staff, and other volunteers, dogs can now run off-leash in the town's first dog park. The plan submitted by the PRC was approved by the



City Council in mid-September. The dog park is located on a town-owned, 1/3-acre lot at the southwest corner of Purissima and Elena Roads, next to the town's corporate yard.

The committee's goal was to create a natural dog park environment, consistent with the rural character of the town together with all the amenities of a dog park — water, benches, garbage cans, and a MuttMitt bag dispenser. The park, which

is open from sunrise to sunset seven days a week, will serve as a gathering place for residents and their canine companions, as well as provide a venue for dog obedience classes offered by the town's Parks and Recreation Department (PRD). The park was selected for its availability, convenient location, easy access by pathways, and nearby parking. Residents and their tail-wagging dogs celebrated the opening of the park at the ribbon-

cutting ceremony on November 6.

To help with infrastructure and maintenance costs of the new dog park, the town and the PRD are kicking off a fundraiser. The Los Altos Hills Dog Park Tile Donation Campaign, to begin in December, is modeled on the successful Donor Wall project that raised funds for the new Town Hall site. Residents, especially pet owners, are invited to design and paint individual tiles. Two sizes will be offered for purchase: 4-inch tiles for \$400 and 8-inch tiles for \$800. The town will partner with Create It!, a ceramic studio located at the Town & Country Shopping Center in Palo Alto, to help residents design and paint tiles. Once all the tiles are completed, they will be mounted to the low cement wall directly in front of Town Hall Chambers.

For more information about the Dog Park Tile Donation Campaign, contact Sarah Gualtieri, Community Services Supervisor, at 650-947-2518 or sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov.



Holiday Heart Health

The winter holiday season brings cooler weather, family gatherings, and holiday celebrations with wonderful traditional meals. However, studies show that there are distinct upticks in the incidence of heart attacks and other less serious heart conditions during the winter season, especially around Christmas and New Year's Day. Reasons for the seasonal increase are not well known, but it is very important to be mindful of your heart health during this busy and potentially stressful time of the year.

By taking some simple steps and paying close attention to the choices you make, you can significantly improve your heart health and steer clear of heart problems during the holidays as well as throughout the year.

1. Eat heart healthy

- Embrace fresh fruits and vegetables. Place more of them on your plate instead of meats that may contain an excess amount of salt and bad fats.
- Snack on unsalted nuts and seeds instead of holiday treats and baked goods. Nuts contain high amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat as well as antioxidants.
- Prevent heartburn and avoid eating a large meal, which is known to be one of the triggers for angina, or chest discomfort.

2. Manage your stress levels

- Take a few moments to stretch, breathe in fresh oxygen to your heart and lungs, and clear your mind. Not only will it help you focus, it will lower your stress level, blood pressure, and heart rate.

3. Do not ignore early warning signs of a heart attack. If you think you may be having a heart attack, call 911.

- Know that women and diabetics do not always get the same classic "Hollywood heart attack" symptoms.
- Heart attacks have beginnings that may include mild chest symptoms described as pressure, burning, aching or tightness. These symptoms may come and go until finally becoming constant and severe. Heart attacks may also present with discomfort that spreads to other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, nausea, heartburn, sweating, and extreme fatigue.

El Camino Hospital Norma Melchor Heart & Vascular Institute offers a free risk assessment to help you understand your heart health and what you can do to improve it: www.elcamino-hospital.org/heart. At the end of the assessment, you will receive a printable report to discuss with your doctor.



TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
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Town Newsletter Statement of Purpose

This is the official town newsletter to communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the town — to facilitate, encourage, and improve interaction between the residents and the town government. The newsletter is published quarterly. **Deadline for the next issue is January 6, 2015.**

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

Our Town

Our Town is published with assistance from the City Clerk, Deborah Padovan, and Town Volunteer Committees.

Editor: Alexander Atkins

Associate Editor: Glen Reed

Contributing Writers: Sarah Gualtieri, AJ Uppal

Photography: Alexander Atkins, Jitze Couperus, Kathy Evans, Sarah Gualtieri, ISRO, NASA, Nina Nesmith, Deborah Padovan, Scott Vanderlip, Tay Vanderlip, Tiffany Zhong

Los Altos Hills City Council

John Radford, Mayor
Courtenay Corrigan, Vice Mayor
John Harpootlian
Rich Larsen
Gary Waldeck

City Manager

Carl Cahill

CALENDAR



**Dec
7**

Sunday, 1:00-4:00 pm
Holiday Barn Lighting
School groups and individuals are invited to perform. Call 650-947-2518 to sign up. Arts and crafts, visits with Santa, pony rides, petting zoo, and wine tasting.

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Thursday, 7:30-9:00 pm
Caroling in the Hills
Join us for cookies and cider in the Parks and Recreation Building before heading out to carol. Wear warm clothes and bring

a flashlight. For more information call 650-947-2518.

**Jan 2015
10**

Saturday, 1:00-4:00 pm
Technology for Seniors

Seniors can bring their questions about social media, cameras, computers, email, and cell phones. To register, volunteer, and further information contact linkagestimebank@gmail.com or call 650-625-3815.

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Wed., 9:00-10:00 am
Recyclables Processing Tour

Tour the GreenWaste Recovery Inc. facility in San Jose. Tour is open to all residents. To register and learn more contact sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov, 650-947-2518.



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Thursday, 10:00 am-noon
Painterly Photographs

Fine art photographer Susanne Karlak, whose work is currently on exhibit at Town Hall, will explore what makes a photographer an artist. Karlak will also demonstrate the techniques she uses to create her stunning painterly images. Refreshments will be served at the event. For more information please call 650-941-8073 or 650-941-7222.

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Saturdays in the Snow
Sign up for Blue Angles Youth Ski and Snowboard Program! This course includes five full days of

age-level-specific professional supervision on and off the slopes. To register or for more information contact sgualtieri@losaltoshills.ca.gov, 650-947-2518.

**Feb
6**

Friday, 7:00-9:00 pm
Teen Movie Night

This evening is hosted by the Los Altos Hills Youth Commission. Bring a sleeping bag, chair, blankets. This is a free event for all Los Altos Hills teens and will be located in the Town Hall Council Chambers. For more information contact 650-947-2518.

Calendar events are also posted on town's website: www.losaltoshills.ca.gov